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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 TEL AVIV 006468

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Secretary Rice to Israel, West Bank November 13-14,

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2005

Key stories in the media:

All major media, except The Jerusalem Post, led with the political situation in Israel.

Israel Radio reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and FM Silvan Shalom this morning in Jerusalem. Ha'aretz quoted political sources as saying Sunday that Secretary Rice is likely to demand that Sharon step up

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negotiations over operating the border crossing in Rafah to enable free passage between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, and expand the activity of the Karni cargo terminal, which is considered the "bottleneck" of the Palestinian economy in the Gaza Strip. Ha'aretz wrote that Rice will also seek to ascertain from Sharon how Israel will act in the event that Hamas takes part in the PA's parliamentary elections. Ha'aretz noted that the topic came up in the course of Rice's preliminary meetings with top Sharon aide Dov Weisglass, during his visit to Washington. The Jerusalem Post banners: "Rice to Nudge Both Sides During Brief Visit." The Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz reported that, addressing the Saban Forum in Jerusalem on Sunday, Secretary Rice called on Israel to grant the Palestinians more freedom of movement and that she implored the Palestinians to tackle terrorism. The Jerusalem Post and Ha'aretz quoted Secretary Rice as saying that the possibility of peace would be more potent if "the Palestinians fight terrorism and violence and advance democratic reform, and Israel takes no action to prejudge the final talks and works to improve the daily lives of the Palestinians." The Jerusalem Post quoted her as saying that more Israelis have come to recognize that a democratic Palestinian state is in Israel's security interest. The Secretary was also quoted as saying that the PA's dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure is essential "because in the final analysis no democratic government can tolerate armed parties with one foot in politics and one foot in the camp of terror."

The Jerusalem Post wrote that during their speeches before the Saban Forum, Sharon and Rice "seemed on exactly the same page regarding Iran, Syria, and Iraq."

Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that a high-level meeting on Sunday slated to reach Israeli-Palestinian agreement on opening the Rafah border crossing ended in a stalemate. Ha'aretz reported that the Quartet's special envoy, James Wolfensohn, met with Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and PA Minister of Civilian Affairs Muhammad Dahlan, but that he did not resolve the key dispute: Israel's demand for information on those entering via the crossing in time to thwart the

entry of those involved in terror. Ha'aretz quoted Israeli sources as saying that the Palestinians toughened their stance at the meeting. The newspaper reported that on Sunday, Wolfensohn called the next 72 hours "critical to his mission" in a meeting with the managers of the Karni cargo terminal. Ha'aretz further quoted Wolfensohn as saying he is frustrated by the lack of change in atmosphere between Israel and the Palestinians and the risk that the Gaza Strip will become a huge prison. Ha'aretz quoted Wolfensohn as saying he planned to report his concern to Secretary Rice.

In its lead story, Ha'aretz quoted several Labor Party ministers as saying on Sunday that Labor Party ministers will resign from the government even before the Knesset votes this Wednesday on four bills to dissolve the house, if the faction decides to support the bills at its own meeting on Tuesday. Yediot banners newly elected Labor Party Chairman Amir Peretz's intransigence regarding his demand that Labor begin moves this week to dismantle the government. Leading media reported that senior Labor Party members lashed out at Peretz on Sunday over his behavior toward Sharon, accusing him of generating a needless crisis by issuing an ultimatum to the PM.

Maariv reported that an increasing number of Likud members -- including Mofaz, in an interview with the newspaper -- are calling on Knesset Member Binyamin Netanyahu not to vie for party leadership and to stand behind Sharon in the struggle against the Peretz-led Labor Party. Mofaz was quoted as saying in the interview with Maariv that Netanyahu and the Likud "rebels" must form a political alliance with Sharon. Yediot reported that senior Likud members are mulling a proposal to cancel the party's primaries, as Sharon would remain party chairman and Netanyahu would become his deputy. Maariv quoted a Sharon associate as saying Sunday that Sharon is inclined to stay in the Likud in view of the approaching elections and Peretz' election as chairman of the Labor Party. A Yediot/Mina Zemach (Dahaf Institute) poll conducted among members of the Likud's Central Committee found that Sharon's opponents constitute a large majority among the party's candidates for the next Knesset.

Maariv quoted Secretary Rice as saying before the Saban Forum that the late PM Yitzhak Rabin was a peace pioneer. Leading media reported that the Knesset will hold a special session in Rabin's memory to mark ten years of his assassination. The media reported that 1,000 figures, including members of foreign delegations who have arrived in recent days, have been invited to the event. Yediot published an op-ed article by British FM Tony Blair in memory of Rabin.

Israel Radio reported that last night, the IDF responded with artillery fire to a launching of mortars next to the Gaza Strip-Israel barrier. Ha'aretz and The Jerusalem Post reported that IDF troops shot and killed a Palestinian gunman while he lay wounded in a yard in Jenin on Saturday. Leading media reported that the security forces defused a booby-trapped car that had been abandoned for over two weeks next to a shopping mall in Holon, a southern suburb of Tel Aviv. Yediot reported that IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz has recommended that the army not impose a general closure of the territories following terrorist attacks, saying that such a measure constitutes a collective punishment that eventually harms Israel.

Hatzofe reported that the Israeli defense establishment has recently exposed attempts by terror organizations to transfer terror means to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank through Egypt and Jordan. The newspaper wrote that the terror activists were spotted at the Allenby Bridge.

Leading media reported that on Sunday, U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton expressed strong support for Israel's construction of the separation fence, stating that every government has an obligation to protect its citizens and criticizing the Palestinian Authority and the residents of the territories for not doing enough to prevent terrorism against Israel. Ha'aretz reported that on Sunday, former U.S. President Bill Clinton met with Sharon and condemned Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statement that "Israel must be wiped off the map, adding that Ahmadinejad was elected to improve the situation of his country, but that such comments only isolate it. A headline in Yediot reads: "Bill and Hillary Have Conquered Israel."

Maariv cited the UN's anger over a proclamation by Israeli customs of the Kuneitra crossing on the Golan

as an international border crossing, following smuggling of goods into Israel by UN officials.

Ha'aretz and Maariv reported that on Sunday, the state told the High Court of Justice that Israel Air Force warplanes break the sound barrier over the Gaza Strip to confuse terrorists.

Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that on Sunday, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf defended his recent efforts at rapprochement with Israel and American Jews, describing them as a "strategic decision" in an interview with CNN.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Plasan Sasa, a company based in Kibbutz Sasa in Galilee, has won a contract to supply the U.S. Marines with armor protection kits for their Oshkosh trucks in a deal worth USD 100 million.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli neurologist Dr. Rivka Inzelberg was invited by her Iranian colleagues to lecture on her findings about Alzheimer's disease during a recent conference in Istanbul.

Yediot reported that the CIA tortured and killed a detainee in Iraq.

Secretary Rice to Israel, West Bank, November 13-14,

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Summary:

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "This pedantry on the part of Israel, all of whose moves undoubtedly stem from some sort of security need, has already provoked the Quartet's representative, James Wolfensohn, to issue warnings and even to state that nothing has changed in the Strip since the IDF's departure."

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Whether you are newly elected Labor Party Chairman Amir Peretz championing the Oslo path or Ariel Sharon demanding that the PA live up to the Roadmap before further progress is made -- there is an Israeli consensus."

Former Secretary of State James A. Baker, III wrote in Ha'aretz: "The memory of [Yitzhak Rabin] should remind each of us -- Israeli, Arab, and American alike -- that peace should always be more than only a prayer. It should be our aspiration."

Block Quotes:

I. "Endangering the Disengagement "

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (November 14): "The government seeks to enjoy the best of all possible worlds: to disengage from Gaza and make the Palestinian Authority responsible for its economic future, while imposing an absolute freeze on any diplomatic negotiations over the region's future.... The current dispute between the PA and Israel over the question of the border crossing between Egypt and Gaza is liable to create the impression that we are talking about some inviolable security necessity.... It would not be superfluous to examine whether Israel could not concede on this issue, whose security importance is far outweighed by the benefits of resolving the dispute. This pedantry on the part of Israel, all of whose moves undoubtedly stem from some sort of security need, has already provoked the Quartet's representative, James Wolfensohn, to issue warnings and even to state that nothing has changed in the Strip since the IDF's departure. This is a severe statement, which is aimed primarily at Israel and can be heard clearly in Washington. Israel, the PA, and members of the Quartet all have a clear interest in Wolfensohn persisting in his efforts rather than throwing up his hands in despair."

II. "The Wrong Path"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (November 14): "On all the ideas Abbas could have raised on Friday [during a ceremony in memory of Yasser Arafat], it is disheartening he chose to hammer away at the usual non-starters: Israel withdrawal to the 1967 'borders' including Jerusalem's

holy places, and the demand for the 'return' of the 'refugees'.... Such intransigence coupled with a self-defeating refusal to stop the violence is indeed embracing Arafat's 'legacy.' But it is not the way toward peace.... Whether you are newly elected Labor Party Chairman Amir Peretz championing the Oslo path or Ariel Sharon demanding that the PA live up to the Roadmap before further progress is made -- there is an Israeli consensus: no return to the 1949 Armistice lines -- Abbas's so-called 1967 'borders.' No 'return of the 1948 refugees and their descendants.... No Israeli government will halt construction of the security barrier. And no Israeli prime minister -- no matter how accommodating -- will sit on his hands as scores of Israelis are slaughtered in cafes, buses, and markets. His predecessor's policies brought despair and the relentless shedding of innocent blood. If he is to lead the Palestinians along the path to a better future, Arafat's are the last 'principles' Abbas should be seeking to emulate."

III. "James Baker Remembers Yitzhak Rabin"

Former Secretary of State James A. Baker, III wrote in Ha'aretz (November 14): "I am honored to lead the American presidential delegation to Israel this week to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the tragic loss of Yitzhak Rabin, a man whom I was proud to call my friend. He was a true giant -- a soldier tempered by war whose tireless efforts in the name of peace are a reminder that anything is possible, even in the face of daunting opposition, through commitment and vision. This anniversary should serve as a moment to recall the extraordinary life of a tireless defender of Israel and a visionary who struggled -- and died -- for a future where Israelis could live in peace with all their neighbors. And it is an occasion to rededicate ourselves to that dream.... Foremost, Mr. Rabin believed that military strength was to be used to obtain peace, not merely to exercise military control.... He also believed that the special relationship between Israel and the United States was critical to promoting negotiations for a lasting peace between Israelis and Arabs. He understood that the United States cannot 'create peace' in the Middle East. Only Arabs and Israelis can do that. But Washington can play an important role in that difficult process. And finally, he believed that peace was crucial to the long-term security of Israel.... Yitzhak Rabin was a true visionary who possessed a unique understanding of his country, and its role in the region and the world. As such, he will never be forgotten. But the memory of him should remind each of us -- Israeli, Arab, and American alike -- that peace should always be more than only a prayer. It should be our aspiration."

JONES